

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 SS-15 PM-05 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 PA-02
/035 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/RPM:WSHINN, JR.
APPROVED BY EUR:JWSHINN
S/S: PTARNOFF
PM/ISP:JHHAWES

-----066210 312038Z /50

O 312021Z MAR 78 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

UNCLAS STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140

LONDON PASS DEPSEC CHRISTOPHER PARTY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MILI, MNUC, NATO

SUBJECT: EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN OF MARCH 31

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN WHICH APPEARED
IN THE WASHINGTON POST MARCH 31.

BEGIN TEXT:

THE HEATED DEBATE OVER THE NEUTRON BOMB

PRESIDENT CARTER'S UNSEEMLY EFFORT TO ESCAPE POLITICAL
BLAME FOR ARMING NATO WITH THE NEUTRON "BOMB" HAS GENERATED
POPULAR RESISTANCE TO A VITAL MILITARY-MODERNIZATION
PROGRAM, BUILDING "A DEBATE OF ENORMOUS IGNORANCE" WITHIN
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140

THE ALLIANCE THAT IS KEPT ALIVE BY SOVIET PROPAGANDA.

PRESIDENT CARTER MAY SOON ANNOUNCE THE START OF
PRODUCTION OF THE NEUTRON, A NUCLEAR WARHEAD FOR SHORT-
RANGE TACTICAL MISSILES THAT KILLS WITH ENHANCED RADIATION
RATHER THAN FIRE AND BLAST. NEVERTHELESS, THE AGONIZING IN-
DECISION THAT HAS MARKED THE ADMINISTRATION'S HANDLING OF

THE NEUTRON IS A SIGNAL EXAMPLE OF SUPERPOWER LEADERSHIP
SUCCUMBING TO PEDESTRIAN POLITICS.

THAT RETREAT FROM REALITY IS COSTLY, CONSIDERING THE
OVERWHELMING CONSENSUS OF MILITARY EXPERTS AND
KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS IN THE STATE AND DEFENSE DEPART-
MENTS: THE NEUTRON BOMB WOULD VASTLY REDUCE THE THREAT
TO WESTERN EUROPE OF BLITZKRIEG-STYLE TANK ATTACK BY
THE WARSAW PACT ON THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION.

ADMITTEDLY, MANY WESTERN POLITICIANS REFUSE TO
ACCEPT EVEN THE REMOTE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET LEADERS' EVER
AUTHORIZING AN ATTACK. BUT SUCH WISHFUL THINKING FLIES
IN THE FACE OF THE CONVENTIONAL MILITARY IMBALANCE IN
CENTRAL EUROPE; GEN. ALEXANDER HAIG, NATO SUPREME
COMMANDER, ON MARCH 21 DESCRIBED AS "GRIEVOUS" THE
SUPERIORITY OF WARSAW PACT TANK FORCES ALONE.

EXISTING NUCLEAR WARHEADS ON THE 60-MILE LANCE
MISSILE, IF DELIVERED AGAINST A COMMUNIST TANK ATTACK,
WOULD SPREAD TERRIBLE DESTRUCTION AND DEATH TO CIVILIANS
THROUGH BLAST EFFECT AND FIRE. IN CONTRAST, THE NEUTRON
WARHEAD IS DESIGNED TO KILL TANK CREWS THROUGH RADIATION,
THEREBY MENACING THE HEART OF SOVIET MILITARY STRATEGY
IN CENTRAL EUROPE: THE MASSED-TANK ATTACK. IN POPULAR
DEBATE, IT HAS BEEN TRANSMOGRIFIED INTO A WEAPON THAT
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140

KILLS PEOPLE BUT SPARES PROPERTY--DISTORTED BUT EFFECTIVE
POLITICAL PROPAGANDA.

BY TRULY INHIBITING THE SOVIETS, THE NEUTRON WARHEAD
COULD MAKE NUCLEAR WAR ON THE CONTINENT LESS LIKELY.
SINCE IT DETERS THE MASSED-TANK ATTACK, WESTERN NUCLEAR
RESPONSE BECOMES LESS LIKELY.

WHY, THEN, DID PRESIDENT CARTER NOT ORDER AN IMMEDI-
ATE START OF PRODUCTION WHEN CONGRESS APPROVED FUNDS FOR
THE NEUTRON BOMB? THE REASON: HE BUCKLED TO PRESSURE.

FEARING A POLITICAL REACTION, THE PRESIDENT OVER-
RULED MILITARY AND SOME CIVILIAN ADVISERS (INCLUDING
THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S BUREAU OF POLITICAL-MILITARY
AFFAIRS). INSTEAD, HE QUIETLY INVITED WEST GERMANY
AND OTHER NATO ALLIES TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP AND FORMALLY
ASK FOR THE NEUTRON. FROM THAT SAFE PERCH, THE PRESIDENT
WOULD THEN GIVE HIS APPROVAL.

- THAT FORCED ON WEST GERMAN CHANCELLOR HELMUT SCHMIDT
A DECISION MORE PAINFUL THAN THE ONE CARTER SIDE-STEPPED.

ALTHOUGH SCHMIDT COULD EASILY GET HIS BUNDESTAG TO APPROVE THE NEUTRON, HE WOULD ENDANGER HIS OWN POWER BECAUSE OF OPPOSITION WITHIN HIS SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY IN THE ABSENCE OF A STRONG U.S. LEAD.

AS THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION CONTINUED TO PRO-CRASTINATE AND SEEK SOME EASY WAY OUT, OTHER SOCIALIST GOVERNMENTS IN WESTERN EUROPE (PARTICULARLY THE DUTCH) WAVERED UNDER POLITICAL PRESSURE. "THE CONTROVERSY SUDDENLY STARTED TO BUILD AND A DEBATE OF ENORMOUS IGNORANCE BROKE OUT ALL OVER EUROPE," ONE WESTERN EUROPEAN DIPLOMAT TOLD US.

ENTER MOSCOW. SENSING DISORDER IN NATO, THE SOVIET UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 04 STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140

UNION UNLEASHED A TYPICAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE "INHUMAN" NEUTRON BOMB. DEMONSTRATIONS IN WESTERN EUROPE WERE PROMOTED AMID SOVIET DEMANDS THAT THE UNITED STATES RENOUNCE THE WEAPON.

THE PASSION OF THE SOVIET CAMPAIGN CAME NOT ONLY FROM THE ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT DISSENSION WITHIN NATO, BUT ALSO THE DESIRE TO SAFEGUARD SOVIET STRATEGY. IF CONFRONTED BY NEUTRON WARHEADS, THE KREMLIN WOULD HAVE TO DEVISE A NEW BATTLE PLAN FOR ITS STILL-GROWING FORCE OF 20,000 TANKS IN CENTRAL EUROPE TO CARRY OUT ANY ATTACK AGAINST THE WEST.

THE PECULIAR MILITARY VALUE OF THE NEUTRON WARHEAD IS THAT IT HAS NO OBVIOUS OFFENSIVE ROLE TO PLAY, ONLY A DEFENSIVE ROLE, WHICH FOR NATO WOULD CORRECT THE DANGEROUS IMBALANCE IN CONVENTIONAL FORCES. NATO'S ONLY ROLE IS DEFENSIVE; THE WARSAW PACT'S ONLY ROLE, EXCEPT FOR POLICING MOSCOW'S EUROPEAN EMPIRE, IS OFFENSIVE. THUS THE EMOTIONAL POLITICAL DEBATE WITHIN NATO AGAINST THE NEUTRON IS IRRATIONAL.

THAT DEBATE HAS BECOME SO HEATED IN WEST GERMANY THAT ITS OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN FORBIDDEN TO USE THE WORD "NEUTRON." IN DECIDING FINALLY TO ORDER PRODUCTION OF THAT DEFENSIVE WEAPON, CARTER WILL UNDOUBTEDLY COME UNDER HARSH ATTACK. IRONICALLY, IT WILL BE HARSHER THAN IF HE HAD GRASPED THE ISSUE FIRMLY LAST SUMMER INSTEAD OF PASSING THE BUCK TO THE EUROPEANS.

END TEXT.

COOPER
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 05 STATE 083368 TOSEC 030140

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, NUCLEAR WEAPONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE083368
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WSHINN, JR.
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780140-0909
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978032/aaaaabbh.tel
Line Count: 175
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: fb4b81bc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3186367
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN OF MARCH 31 FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF EVANS AND NOVAK COLUMN WHICH APPEARED IN THE WASHINGTON POST MARCH 31.
TAGS: MILI, MNUC, SOPN, NATO
To: LONDON SECRETARY
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/fb4b81bc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014